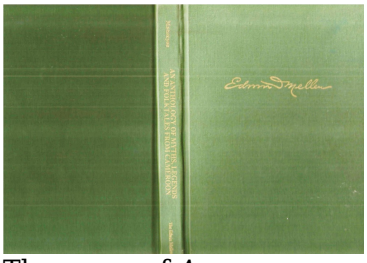
Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: The Origin of the Dry and Rainy Seasons by Emmanuel Matateyou, Elias Mbome", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke and Katarzyna Marciniak and team members in Warsaw. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/195. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Emmanuel Matateyou , Elias Mbome

The Origin of the Dry and Rainy Seasons

Cameroon (1997)

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions



The cover of *An Anthology of Myths, Legends and Folktales from Cameroon* by Emmanuel Matateyou. Courtesy of The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd.

General information	
Title of the work	The Origin of the Dry and Rainy Seasons
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Bakweri
First Edition Date	1997
First Edition Details	Emmanuel Matateyou, *An Anthology of Myths, Legends and Folktales from Cameroon*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997, 255 pp.
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	August 15, 1991 (summarised from a book published in 1999, in which the date of the collection of the story is mentioned)
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Buea, Southwest Cameroon
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaoundé 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com

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Creators



Emmanuel Matateyou by Rama. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under Cc-by-sa-2.0-fr (accessed: December 15, 2021).

Emmanuel Matateyou , b. 1952
(Author, Storyteller)

Emanuel Matateyou is a writer and a professor at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, University of Yaoundé 1. He is a former Fulbright scholar and has published widely on oral literature and Cameroonian culture and languages. Some of his publications include: *An Anthology of myths, legends and folktales from Cameroon* (1997), *Les Merveilleux récits de Tita Ki* (2001), *Parlons Bamoun* (2001), *Problématique d'une conciliation du réel et l'irréel* (1999), *Les sociétés secrètes dans la littérature camerounaise le cas des Bamoun*. 2. vol. (1990).

Bio prepared by Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com



Elias Mbome (Storyteller)

Age of Narrator: 69 (in 1995)

Occupation: Carpenter

Language: Bakweri

Bio prepared by Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Summary

This is a reprint, with slight syntax changes, of the story as it appears in: *An Anthology of Myths, Legends and Folktales from Cameroo*n by Emmanuel Matateyou, published in 1997 (pp. 46–48) by The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd. We have the permission of the publisher and the author to publish up to 10 myths in this collection in the context of our project on "Our Mythical Childhood…". We are therefore thankful to The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd and Professor Mataeyou for granting us this permission.

A long time ago the partridge from the hill and the partridge from the forest had a heated argument. The partridge from the hill said he could cause a downpour whose test the other could not stand, and the partridge from the forest said that he could cause a drought whose test the partridge from the forest could not stand. To test their skills, they agreed that the partridge from the forest should bring the downpour while the partridge from the hill should bring the drought. They agreed on the duration for each test.

The partridge from the forest fluttered his wings and cried "Rikwikwi! Rikwikwi! Rickwikwi!" A dark cloud suddenly appeared and began to cover the sky; a very strong wind began to blow. The trees swayed and the air was full of dust. River overflowed their banks, and there was water everywhere. No man, animal, or bird could go outside. Houses were flooded and most of the animals that could not climb trees were drowned. When the time set for the rain test was up, the partridge from the forest came out from his hiding place and cried "Rikwikwi! Rikwikwi! Rickwikwi!" and the rain ceased as suddenly as it began. The partridge from the hill had gone into hiding in a hole in a rock. He came out of his hiding place, shock his feathers, and greeted his friend: "My good friend, thank God, I am still alive." "Yes", answered his friend. "We are both alive. I have fulfilled my own part of the bargain. It is now your turn." "It is true that you have indeed fulfilled your own part of the bargain. Now go back to your hiding place and get ready. I will not be the one to disappoint you" said the partridge from the hill as he took a deep breath and cried "Rikwikwi! Rikwikwi! Rickwikwi!" The sky suddenly cleared and the sun was comforting. Men, animals, and birds come out of their cold and damp hiding places and basked in the sun. The heat gradually became intense and oppressive; and men, animals, and birds once more sought shelter.

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The sun shone and shone and shone. Streams and rivers and wells dried up. Plants withered and died. The earth cracked and it became almost impossible to survive in the heat of the scorching sun. The partridge from the forest, having exhausted his store of water, was dying of thirst. He ventured out to look for a drop of water, but there was none everywhere. At last he came to a pond, where the mud was still wet. He settled down and sucked some of the mud, and then laid down to rest. Meanwhile, the sun continued to shine mercilessly. The mud in the pond hardened. The partridge of the forest continued to sleep. At long last, the time expired, and the partridge from the hill fluttered out of his hiding place cackling, “kikwa-a, kikwa-a, kikwa-a!” but the partridge from the forest did not answer. The partridge from the hill roamed everywhere searching for his friend, “kikwa-a, kikwa-a!”, but no reply. He searched and searched until he came upon his friend. “Kikwa-a, kikwa-a, kikwa-a”, he called, but no reply. His friend was still asleep. He shook his sleeping friend, but found that he had been baked as hard as a rock by the scorching sun. “Poor thing”, he wept, “why did you agree to something you were not up to? However, in memory of your death we shall from today have two seasons in the year – the rainy season and the dry season. Your death is proof that my magic is stronger than yours, so my dry season will be shorter and less intense than your rainy season.” That is how our two seasons came to be; and that is why one is longer than the other.

Analysis

With the variation of seasons in different cultures, humanity under such incomprehensible conditions, has been doing all to come to terms with the different manifestations in seasons or seasonal changes. Geographers in other environments have likened it to the four phases of the sun’s orbit, yet it is not the same everywhere. It is for this reason that the mountainous Bakweri people of the Southwest region of Cameroon move beyond the geographical evidence into a mythological explanation of the origin of seasons in their land and in most places in Africa. Instead of abiding by the sun’s orbit as being at the origin of the seasons, the Bakweri people come in with an anthropomorphic explanation, with God and birds determining the season, their nature and duration.

Classical, Mythological, African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions

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Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Conflict Death Nature
Further Reading	Matateyou, Emmanuel, *An Anthology of Myths, Legends and Folktales from Cameroon*, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd, 1997.
Addenda	Collected by Kate Silo Mbome.

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